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THE REGENCY.

We have now before us, in the shape of **RESOLUTIONS**, proposed in the House of Commons, MR. PERCEVAL's project of limitations of the Royal Authority in the hands of the Prince of Wales. We will, therefore, now take a regular, though, perhaps, concise view of this project; and, at every look, we shall, I am persuaded, imbibe fresh conviction of its unfitness and injustice, and of the evil consequences, which, if adopted, it must tend to produce not only with regard to the Crown, but with regard also to the best interests of the people.—The Resolutions were *five* in number, and were, in substance, if not exactly word for word, as follows:

1. Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that for the purpose of providing for the exercise of the Royal Authority during the continuance of his Majesty's illness, in such manner, and to such extent, as the present circumstances, and the urgent concerns of the Nation appear to require, it is expedient, that his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, being resident within the Realm, shall be empowered to exercise and administer the Royal Authority, according to the Laws and Constitution of Great Britain, in the name, and on the behalf of his Majesty, and under the style and title of Regent of the Kingdom; and to use, execute, and perform, in the name and on the behalf of his Majesty, all Authorities, Prerogatives, Acts of Government, and Administration of the same, that belong to the King of this Realm to use, execute, and perform according to the law thereof, subject to such limitations and exceptions as shall be provided.

2. That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for a time to be limited, the power so to be given to his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales shall not extend to the granting of any rank or dignity of the peerage of the realm to any person whatever, except such person or persons as may per-

form some singular naval or military achievement.

3. That it is the opinion of this Committee, That, for a time to be limited, the said power shall not extend to the granting of any office whatever in reversion, or to the granting of any office, salary, or premium, for any other term than during his Majesty's pleasure, except such offices as are by law required to be granted for life or during good behaviour.

4. That it is the opinion of this Committee, That such parts of his Majesty's private property as are not vested in trustees, shall be vested in trustees for the benefit of his Majesty.

5. That it is the opinion of this Committee, That the care of his Majesty's Royal Person, during the continuance of his Majesty's illness, shall be committed to the care of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty; and that, for a time to be limited, her Majesty shall have the power to remove from, and to nominate and appoint such persons as she shall think proper, to the several Offices in his Majesty's Household; and to dispose, order, and manage all other matters and things relating to the care of his Majesty's Royal Person, during the time aforesaid; and that, for the better enabling her Majesty to discharge this important task, it is also expedient that a Council shall be appointed to advise and assist her Majesty in the several matters aforesaid: and with power, from time to time, as they may see cause, to examine, upon oath, the Physicians and others attending his Majesty's Person, touching the state of his Majesty's health, and all matters relative thereto.

The four first resolutions were moved by Mr. PERCEVAL, on Monday last, the 21st of December; and after a long Debate, were carried by a majority of 16, there being 226 for them and 210 against them. On the 1st instant the 5th Resolution was moved by him, and was lost, by 13 votes, there being 226 for an amendment, moved by LORD GOWER, and 213

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against the amendment; which was as follows: to leave out that part of the Resolution, which is distinguished by *italics*, and to insert other words in their stead, so that the Resolution was, when passed, changed into this:

That it is the opinion of this Committee, That the care of his Majesty's Royal Person, during the continuance of his Majesty's illness, shall be committed to the care of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty: *together with the sole direction of such portion of his Majesty's Household as shall be deemed suitable to a due attendance and regard to his Royal Person*; and that for the better enabling her Majesty to discharge this important task, it is also expedient that a Council shall be appointed to advise and assist her Majesty in the several matters aforesaid; and with power, from time to time, as they may see cause, to examine, upon oath, the physicians and others attending his Majesty's person, touching the state of his Majesty's health, and all matters relative thereto.

Such were the proceedings thus far. What may finally be the fate of the Resolutions; how they may fare when they come to be embodied into a Bill; what they will have to encounter in the House of Lords; this cannot yet be known; but, thus far the thing has gone. We have the project before us; and, though it should finally fail, nothing can do away the intention. That is beyond the power of retraction or disguise. Let us, therefore, now proceed to take a view of this project, as it here lies before us.

The FIRST RESOLUTION is exceptionable only in as much as it talks of *limitations*, and as it implies the conferring of the powers by *Bill* instead of by *Address*, and as it may be construed to mean, that the two Houses of Parliament alone have the right of appointing *whom they please* to supply the place of the King, during his incapacity. All this, however, is little as to the *substance*. There is, in fact, no question as to *who* shall be Regent; and, though there is a good deal to be said as to the mode of proceeding, as to the mode of conferring the authority, still the great question is, whether the authority shall be really conferred *entire*, or whether it shall be partly withheld from the Regent.

The SECOND RESOLUTION withholds from him the power of *making peers*, for a time to be limited, except in cases of singular

naval or military achievements. — As to *time*, there is no argument that can have any weight for a year, which will not have equal weight for any longer period. Such arguments have been attempted; but they have all failed, and, indeed, they have all been anticipated and answered by me long enough ago. — I have shewn before, that, if the power of creating peers ought ever to exist in the hands of the King, it ought to exist in the hands of the Regent; that, to withhold the power from the Regent, is to declare, in acts, that the power is not necessary to the well-governing of the nation; and that, if it is unsafe to entrust it in the hands of the Prince, who is now 48 years of age, and who, in the course of nature, must be expected soon to be King, the inevitable conclusion is, that it is a power *that ought never to be entrusted to the King*. — Has this objection been answered? I have seen no answer to it at all. Nay, I have seen no attempt to answer it. What said Mr. PERCEVAL in his defence of this part of his project? The following is given in the report of his speech of the 31st of December. "It cannot surely be gravely argued that any serious inconvenience is to be apprehended from withholding the honours of peerage for twelve months, when it is recollected that during the last four years, excepting for naval and military services, but two new Peers have been created. When it is also remembered, that in the short administration which preceded the present, no less than eleven were added to the number of the other House, it is obvious that this is a prerogative which may be converted to purposes of an ambiguous nature; that it is a power which may possibly be abused." — Now as to the exception with regard to Naval and Military Officers who may perform some great national service, what does this amount to? Why to a very good reason, *if it be worth any thing at all*, for taking from the King for ever the power of creating any peers but men who shall have performed some singular Naval or Military service. Besides, who is to be the judge of the nature of such service? Who is to say, whether it be singular or not? Who is to have the final determination of such a question? — But, why suffer him to advance Naval and Military officers rather than any body else? It has been truly observed by some one, that it is statesmen that we now stand in need of more than Naval and Military officers. The latter;

from the state of the war, cannot be reasonably expected to have any occasion soon offered them for performing wonderful and singular exploits, such as those of *Lords Gambier and Talavera*; while of *statesmen*, if to save a sinking nation; if to rescue the kingdom from the greatest danger that ever kingdom was placed in; if this be work that calls for the talents of statesmen, of great need do we stand of them; of great need do we stand of the immediate application of their talents; and, of course, if the prerogative of making peers be at any time necessary as a mean in the hands of the Sovereign of calling such talents into exertion, it would be necessary in the hands of the Regent; and, if not necessary then, if not necessary for a year, can never be necessary at all.

—Can MR. PERCEVAL discover nothing for statesmen to do, at this time? Does he look upon the state of the kingdom, whether with regard to its domestic or its foreign concerns, as being so *prosperous* as to require the application of no talents and exertions of a kind to merit the highest reward that the talents and exertions of statesmen can receive? Suppose some one were to discover and put in practice the means of *tranquillizing Ireland*, and of rendering an army unnecessary there; or, of putting a stop to the *further depreciation of money*; or, of giving us a *constitutional reform of parliament* and uniting us heart and hand against the enemy; or, of making *peace with Napoleon without disgrace or danger*. Would not such a man have a stronger claim to the gratitude of the nation, and to the highest reward which the sovereign has to bestow, than any Naval or Military man could possibly have? Where, then, is the reason for shutting such a person out from the peerage, while it is left open for Naval and Military men? —But, though MR. PERCEVAL did not observe, there is no objection, I take it, to our observing, that *all* the Naval and Military men, now in actual service, have had their appointments from *him* and his predecessors of the *PITT* school, who have had the making of all appointments for the last *twenty-six years*; so that, what he would be willing to leave, as to peerages, in the hands of the Prince, would be the promotion to the rank of peers, any men, from amongst those, who have in fact, been selected by *himself* and *his party*; which, to be sure, is a very generous and gracious concession, and, to which, in order to round the proposition, and give it a fi-

nished turn, there really does appear nothing wanting but a further exception in favour of those candidates for the peerage, of whom MR. PERCEVAL and his colleagues might think proper to approve. —He says, that the power of creating peers may be *abused*; and he couples this with an observation, that no less than *eleven* members were added to the other House, during the short administration that immediately preceded the present, while he and his colleagues, during four years (it is only $3\frac{1}{2}$) have added but *two*, excepting Naval and Military officers. —I do not recollect, who the eleven new peers were; but, this I know very well, that, *one half of the whole House*, or thereabouts, have been promoted *to or in* the peerage by *him* and his predecessors of the *same party and school*. He appears to have quite overlooked this circumstance; but, it is a very material one for the *people* to bear in mind; and, if they pay due attention to the *main drift* of his argument, they will clearly see what is the *real* object in withholding the exercise of this prerogative from the Prince, and, the seeing of that object is quite enough to convince them, that the prerogative ought not to be withheld. —I shall not here enter into an inquiry respecting the wisdom or justice of the practice of promoting men to the peerage merely on account of their *wealth*. It is, perhaps, a very nice question to determine how far such a claim to the peerage ought to be admitted. But, it is perfectly notorious, that many men have been, and especially since the power of MR. PITT began to be felt, promoted to the peerage upon no other visible, or assignable ground. What reason, then, can be given for withholding this power from the Prince? Royal favour has flowed all in one channel for an uninterrupted series of 26 years; and is there not, therefore, reason to suppose, that it might now with propriety flow in the *other channel*? If the Prince were Regent only for six months, or for one month, is it likely that he would do much mischief in selecting men from the party opposed to the *Pittites* to promote to the peerage? What *harm* could arise from his causing the Royal favour to flow in a new direction for a *short space of time*? And, if you suppose, that the King will never resume his functions, there is, at once, an end of MR. PERCEVAL's reasoning; unless he will go the length of refusing, in future, the power of the peerage-creation, to the King as well as to the

Regent.—There is one more point, and that, too, admitting of a practical illustration that all the world will understand.—Who is the Prince to have for a Lord Chancellor? “Lord Erskine, to be sure.”——Aye, with all our hearts; but who is to insure Lord Erskine’s *life* for a year? Who is to make him *live* and make him *well* for a year?——Oh! there is Lord Eldon, or, who may do full as well, there is Lord Redsdale, or Lord Ellenborough (for a Chief Justice may, as used to be the case, exist without a peerage); so that the Prince would have *free* liberty to choose his Lord Chancellor, would be *quite at liberty* to choose the person highest in office under him, would have *perfect freedom* to choose the “keeper of his *secrets* and his CONSCIENCE” from amongst those who had been promoted to the peerage by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington!——But, after all, even these men, however pure, and perfect as human beings, are not *immortal*. They too might die, or they might become incapable of performing the functions of Chancellor. What would the Prince then do? He might, to be sure, make *any body* Chancellor, and the House of Lords *might* choose a Speaker; but, *why* should this be? *Why* should he not have the power of adding *one* Lawyer to the number of the peers? Is he less capable of judging as to who ought to be promoted than his father was? Is he more likely to be deceived by evil counsellors? Has he less capacity; is he less qualified for the office of sovereign; or, is there any fact that can be stated that warrants a suspicion that he would abuse his trust, a suspicion that would and must be conveyed in any restriction of any sort that should be imposed upon him, and that was not imposed upon his father. To impose such restriction is, in itself, a mark of degradation, and must be a cause of weakness; and, for the adopting of such a measure the reader will, I am satisfied, not be able to discover the smallest reason, other than *that* reason which the people, with heart and voice, ought to join in rejecting; that is to say, that his having the power to create peers would strongly tend to enable him to disregard the opposition of those, who now contend for the restriction, and to carry into execution measures for changing *that* system, upon which they and their predecessors have invariably acted for the last 26 years, and of which system the country is now, in so many ways, feeling the fatal effects.

To the THIRD RESOLUTION, which prevents the Prince, for the intended year, from granting any office whatever, in reversion, and from granting any office, or salary, or pension, for other term than during the KING’S PLEASURE, except such offices as are by law to be granted for life during good behaviour; to this resolution almost all the arguments against the second Resolution equally apply.—Of grants in reversion it is hardly necessary for me to say, that I am no advocate; but, such has been the profusion of these grants, that the Prince, unless he meant to give offices to children the *fathers* of whom are *not yet born*, would find very little room for the exercise of his power in this way. Therefore, I should be very willing to prevent him from taking away the patronage of *his* natural successor, if, in the same bill, provision be made, that *the King*, if he ever should recover, shall not grant any more reversions; shall not *any further* grant away the patronage that would fall to the Prince or his heir, in due course of time. But, is it not a little too hard upon him, that he should be bound up from granting away what would naturally fall into his hands, while the way is left open for his father, in case of a resumption of his power, to grant away that which would naturally fall into the hands of his son?——This proposition is the more strikingly unjust as coming almost immediately after the struggles of this same Mr. PERCEVAL to keep the power of granting reversions in the hands of the King. It is well known, that Bill after Bill have been brought into the House of Commons, have passed there, and have been rejected by the Lords, the object of which Bills was to prevent the King from making any more grants of offices in reversion; that is to say, from granting away *any more* of those things that would naturally fall into the hands of his successor. To these Bills Mr. Perceval made constant and persevering resistance. He represented the power of granting reversions as necessary to the maintenance of the Crown; but, now he would *withhold* from the Regent, though that Regent is the person, into whose hands the grants would naturally fall, if not made in reversion.—I before observed upon the measure of withholding the power of granting any *place* or *pension* for *life*. Why should it be adopted? Suppose Lord ARDEN were to die and his sinecure place, of twenty thousand pounds

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a year, were to fall into the hands of Mr. PERCEVAL, who has the snug reversion of it; and suppose that Mr. PERCEVAL, by some mishap, were to go off also. Here, if the place were still left in existence, would be a good thing to give away; and why should not the Prince have the giving of it? Is he not as well qualified to choose a person for the office as the King would be, if the latter should recover?—But, the limitation is to go further. It is to prevent him from granting any pension, any office, any salary, except for during the King's pleasure; so that, any person thus appointed, or granted to, would be liable to be displaced or have his pension taken away, at any moment, when the King might recover; and that the thing would *actually be done* there can be very little doubt, if we suppose that the King would take for his advisers those, who would have been in opposition to the Prince. —Thus, then, one of two things must become clear to the people: either that this power being withheld from the Prince, must *shackle and weaken his government*, or that the power is *never necessary to the due discharge of the Kingly office*.—But, indeed, there can be no doubt at all as to the *real* object of this intended restriction. When the operation of it is thus pointed out, there is no man so dull as not clearly to perceive the motive for imposing it. There is no man who must not see, that to make the King, in case of his recovery, the judge of whether the grants made by the Prince should, or should not, stand good, is to *make the Prince as much as possible dependent upon those who propose such restrictions*, and, for one year, at least, to prevent him from making any material change in that system, which has brought us into our present situation.

The FOURTH RESOLUTION takes from the Prince all power over the King's *real or personal* estate, except as far as may relate to the *renewing* of leases.—Now the real estate of the King is, in fact, the property of the people at large, to whose account, in the annual statements laid before Parliament, the proceeds (*such as they are*) are brought. And, why should not the Prince of Wales be allowed to make grants of *new leases of Crown Lands*? Is it likely, that he would grant them away improperly? Is not he as fit to have authority of this sort as those were who granted the Lease to Colonel Gordon, at Chelsea? And, as to the *personal* Estate of the King, that being supposed to be enjoyed for the

public benefit, why should he not have the same power over it that the King had?

—There is no reason that can be urged, except that of *suspicion* of the Prince's character and views; and this, though not openly avowed, is what is conveyed in every one of the limitations, which it has been intended to be imposed upon him, but which intention will not, I trust, be put in execution.

The subject of the FIFTH RESOLUTION was so fully discussed by me, from page 1313 to page 1327, that I have very little to add to what was then said. There was, in the Debate upon the subject, which took place on the first instant, nothing, worth notice, urged in defence of such a proposition. Indeed it was impossible to assign any reason for leaving 16 Lords to be removed or continued or appointed by the Queen and a Council, and leaving all the vast influence of the Household Expenditure in the same hands; it was impossible to assign any reason for this, other than that of keeping so much of the kingly power in the hands of such Council, which Council, be it well observed, is to be (if at all) appointed in the Regency Bill, that is to say, of course, *by the same persons who propose and support the restrictions*. And, for this purpose, the people were to be taxed to provide a separate regal establishment for the Prince, during the time that he should be Regent!—This was the grand stroke of all. This seems to have been intended for the purpose of trying to *what length* things could be pushed against the Prince.

—Indeed, the COURIER of the 31st of December, pretty plainly said, that the most “glorious periods of our history are those in which females have reigned, and MANY PERSONS doubt, whether, as a question of right, or of expedience, THE QUEEN WITH A COUNCIL, would not form the most constitutional and auspicious Regency.”—After reading this passage, and considering the source whence it comes, the reader can entertain very little doubt as to the *real* object of the measure in question.—This venal man was, you see, preparing the way for a defence of even a more bold attempt than that of the measure itself. He was sharpening his mercenary pen for a defence of keeping the whole of the Kingly power in the hands of the Queen and a Council; that is to say, in the hands of the present ministers!—But, here we see, fairly let out, the true grounds, upon which these venal and corrupt writers have

called for restrictions. "The Prince of Wales, it is believed, intends to change all the King's servants and his whole system."

—Mind, they call it *his* system. They do not call it the *minister's* system. Whatever there is odious or ruinous in the system is to fall upon the King, for whom these corrupt writers, and publishers in all shapes, are professing such a *tender regard and concern*.—But, we will not have it so. We will have it to be the system of the persons, by whom the King has, unfortunately, been advised for the last 26 years; and then we will say *let it in God's name be changed*; and all the people will say *Amen*. Why, this is the very reason that the people wish the Prince of Wales to have full powers. Does any one believe; that I, or that any man who has the good of the country at heart, can want to see a mere change of *ministry*, in the *old way*? Oh, no! we want to see no such thing. We want to see a *change of the whole system*; a radical and a sweeping change of it; and, it is because we hope, that such a change would be the consequence of giving full powers to the Prince, that we wish to see full powers given to him. And, is not the Prince of Wales as likely to be able to judge of political systems as his father, afflicted as the latter unhappily has been, in more ways than one, and bent down with age as he now is? Is not the Prince as likely to be able to choose proper advisers as his father was, or ever can be? What a monstrous thing to suppose that he is not? And, why, then, should power of any sort, belonging to the Kingly office, be withheld from him, while, at the same time, he is called upon to exercise that office?

There was an argument of MR. PERCEVAL, in the passage above-quoted from his speech, which applied generally to all the restrictions proposed. "We may feel," said he, "some surprise that they, who in their warm attachment to the doctrines of liberty, assert that all power is a trust, should be, on this occasion, so fearful of diminishing the power of the Executive, or of lessening the checks and restrictions upon the exercise of its authority."

—This, as thus given in the published report, is a fallacy.—It is not proposed "to diminish the power of the Executive:" it is, by the resolutions, proposed to *divide* it. It is proposed, indeed, to make an *addition* in a new establishment for the Prince. No *diminution* at all is proposed. If, indeed, he had proposed to *take away* for

ever the power in the Crown, to make peers, to grant offices in reversion, to grant pensions and places for life, to grant fees or leases of crown-lands, and to appoint Lords of the Household; if he had made such a proposition, the point at issue would have been wholly different. But, no such thing does he propose: he proposes, that all the powers and emoluments, and all the cost to the people, shall still exist; and that a part of the power and money shall be withheld from the Prince, who is to exercise the office of King, and shall be kept in the hands of the *Queen and a Council*, which Council he proposes to be appointed by the same persons who are for withholding the powers and money from the Prince, and as to who would compose such Council there can, therefore, be little difficulty in guessing.—The question, therefore, which he puts to the *Friends of Freedom*, is, not whether the powers of the Crown shall be diminished; but, whether they shall be divided between the Prince and those who are proposing and supporting the intended restrictions. This is the question, upon which the friends of freedom are called upon to decide; and they must be the most inconsistent of all mortals, if they hesitated, for one moment, in deciding in favour of the Prince, especially when they are told, that the great reason for withholding power from him, is, to prevent him from being able to effect a *change of system*, to prevent him from being able, though he might be willing, to do any of those things, for which they have, for so many years, been petitioning in vain. In these petitions, and in the language of the friends of freedom, Mr. PERCEVAL will find no desire expressed to diminish the prerogatives of the Crown. These prerogatives are part of the legitimate powers of the King. They are such as the constitution of England sanctions. The friends of freedom have complained of CORRUPT INFLUENCE; they have complained of that which the constitution and the laws stigmatize and abhor; and, one of their grounds of complaint always has been, that this *Corrupt Influence* is hostile to the just prerogatives of the King as well as to the freedom of his people. This has always been the language of the friends of freedom.—The friends of freedom have no jealousy of the Prince; they have no suspicions of him; he has never done any thing to make them suspect to find in him an enemy to their just demands. There may be men who have so treated him as to have a natural

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dread of seeing him invested with all the Kingly powers; but the *friends of freedom* have never treated him in a way that can inspire them with any such dread. They can see, in none of his actions or words, any cause for fearing that he would use his powers *against* them; and, in the *hostility towards him* shown by *their enemies*, they think they perceive no very weak grounds to hope that he would prove himself *their friend*. This is the view that the *friend of freedom* take of the matter. These are the principles by which they are actuated; and, whatever the venal and corrupt writers, of all sorts and in all shapes, may think; however sure they may believe themselves of having *the people* with them; they will soon find, that the whole nation is with the Prince, and that, too, upon this very ground, namely, that his having full powers will enable him to affect a radical change of system; a complete and total change of that system, which has existed for the last 26 years, and which has brought the country into a state, which, on all hands, is acknowledged to be one from which it has only a chance of escaping without being subdued by a foreign enemy.

This leads me to notice, by way of conclusion, a sort of *episode*, which arose and became of great importance in the debates of the 1st and 2nd instant, relative to the public character of Mr. PITT.—In the proposing and supporting of the Resolutions, on the former day, the *precedent*, as it is called, of 1788, was urged, and, in order to give weight to that precedent, the name of its author, Mr. PITT, was introduced, accompanied with an *eulogium* upon his character as a *statesman*.—SIR SAMUEL ROMILLY spoke against the Resolutions, and, in answering that part of the argument which was built upon the precedent of 1788, he also, in answer to what had been said of its author, observed, that he could see *no good reason* for thinking Mr. Pitt a *great man*. A deriding shout from the other side of the House called from him, in his mild and dignified manner, an observation, that those who differed from him in opinion would better consult the credit of the character they were so zealous in supporting, by citing *any one instance*, in which Mr. Pitt had proved himself a *great man* by being the author of measures that had produced *benefit to his country*.—The Morning Post says, that Mr. WILBERFORCE answered it

thus:—"That throughout the course of a long public life, it had been marked by more of *forgetfulness for his own situation*, by more of *veneration and regard for his country and for the general interests of the world*, than any other man placed in a similar situation. He had therefore experienced much of pain, to find that the hon. and learned gentleman should have thought it necessary to *rake up the ashes* of that great man, in order to pass a fleeting censure upon his memory. It was not however the testimony of his (Mr. W.'s) sentiments, that could rescue his character from *aspersions* so unmerited, that testimony was recorded in the minds of his countrymen, his public actions were before the world, and *those were best able to judge of him who knew him best*; but his character would be done justice to by *future historians*, as indeed it had been by *the historian of the day*."—Now, what answer was this? What was there here to oppose Sir Samuel Romilly? What was there here to show, that his opinion was not well-founded? What was all this *general talk* about forgetfulness of his own situation, veneration for his country, love of mankind? What was this? Why did not this defender of Mr. Pitt's character give the *instance* which Sir Samuel Romilly called for? Mr. Wilberforce ought to be very familiar with all the instances to be referred to, having been his *most constant supporter*. Why, then, did he not give the single instance, in which he adopted a measure, which had proved *beneficial to England*? The reason is plain; for, it is not to be believed, that he would not have done it, if he could.—Instead of such instance; instead of proof that Sir Samuel Romilly was wrong in his opinion; instead of proof that Mr. Pitt was a great man; we are, forsooth, to be content with Mr. Wilberforce's assertion, that "*those were best able to judge of Mr. Pitt who knew him best*." Oh, no! Mr. Wilberforce; we shall not yield to this. Those are best able to judge of him, *who are best able to ascertain and to estimate the effects of his measures*. These are the persons best able to judge, whether he ought to be called a *great man* or not. We shall not take his character from those who *dined and drank* with him; Oh, no! nor from those "*historians of the day*," though they may be Police Magistrates, and thought, by some persons,

worthy of pensions, paid out of the public money. We shall not pin our faith upon such sleeves, I assure you. We have his acts before us, and the fruit of his acts. We have the *Statute-Book*; we have the *Paper-money*; we have the *million of paupers*; we have the *state of Ireland*; we have the *Conquests of France*. We have all these before us, and, with these before us, we shall not ask the character of Mr. Pitt from Messrs. Boyd and Benfield, or from Mr. Thomas Steele, or from Mr. Villiers, or Mr. Hunt, or even from Lord Melville, or G. Rose, or Mr. Canning or Mr. Huskisson. All these were amongst the most intimately acquainted with Mr. Pitt; they, therefore, according to Mr. Wilberforce's notion, *knew him best*; but, we shall not, for that reason, trust to *their* judgment upon the subject, when we have all the acts of the man before us, and while we feel so grievously the consequences of these acts. Those are the best able to judge of Mr. Pitt who feel the Assessed Taxes, the Income Tax: and who, according to the statement of Mr. Huskisson get *fifteen shillings in the pound* for their money in the funds. These are the persons to judge of Mr. Pitt, and not those who dined and drank with him, and who got *titles and places and grants and pensions and other good things*, which, though not of a *direct* sort, are not the less gratifying to some people, or less likely to warp men's judgment. Oh, no! Mr. Wilberforce, we shall, I assure you, take his character from persons of this description; but, shall judge from facts, facts which we are all acquainted with, and that no man can now disguise from us.—In the debate of the 2nd instant this topic was revived by Mr. CANNING, who having taken 24 hours to collect his materials, took occasion (amidst loud cries of *question*) to come out with what some people call an *eloquent* eulogium on Mr. Pitt, during which, as the newspapers say, he charged Sir Samuel Romilly with having *calumniated* the character of his dear departed friend.—Sir Samuel Romilly, whose answer is said to have been most admirable, coolly told him, that he would better have consulted the credit of his departed friend's memory, if he had

pointed out *one single act of his by which England or any part of mankind had been benefited*. Sir FRANCIS BURDETT followed; and, though I do not see his speech reported, I am quite sure, that he did not fail to point out acts enough, of the "*great man*," which had been a cruel scourge to England and to mankind.—I have not room for a quarter part of what I wish to say upon this subject; but, I will return to it in my next; though I cannot even now forbear to notice what is said to have fallen from Mr. PONSONBY; namely, that he and those with whom he *acted* (I was in hopes that this sort of *acting* was over) *disclaimed* attacks upon Mr. Pitt's character. What! do they then mean to *cling to the system*? I want no other *test* than this; and observe, that this was said too (if it was said) during a discussion in which Mr. Pitt's character as a statesman had been brought forward to *give weight* to a *precedent* which was urged in order to cramp the power of the Prince of Wales, and, which is still stronger, against which precedent the *Prince had himself protested at the time*! I can hardly believe, that this was said by Mr. PONSONBY; but, if it was said, and said deliberately and with the concurrence of his party, I am quite sure that the designs of that party, be they who they may, are hostile to the interests of the people of England. The people are greatly indebted to Sir Samuel Romilly for having stood forward in defence of *their* character upon this occasion; for, if they deserved what they received at the hands of Mr. Pitt, how is it possible to find terms sufficiently degrading to describe them. The more that man's character is discussed the better. It is vitally essential that it should be brought to its proper level. Discussion, if free, will bring out *truth*, and truth is all we want. What disgrace, what misery, what incalculable mischiefs would England never have known if Mr. Pitt had died the day after he first became minister! But, I have no room, and must, therefore, postpone all further observation till my next.

WM. COBBETT.

State Prison, Newgate,
Friday, 4th Jan. 1811.